

NEWS
FROM THE

COMMITTEE

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, PLaza 1-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR RELEASE AFTER 2 P.M., TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 1968

WASHINGTON, April 2.... A nationwide campaign to spur support for implementation of the recommendations of the Kerner Commission report was announced tonight by the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE.

At an extraordinary meeting of its Board of Governors, held in Washington to dramatize what was called "the urgent need" as well as to give policy-making AJC members an opportunity to convey their concern to appropriate Government officials, a three-part program was unfolded:

- * To convene regional meetings of AJC chapters and units where members in all parts of the country will be able to map plans on how they can best involve themselves in the implementation activity;
- * To call community-wide conferences in cities where AJC chapters and units exist, for the purpose of revealing the pressure points in American cities that have the potential for creating summer disorder, and to undertake commensurate activity in such crucial areas as employment, housing, services to young people, etc.

* To report back for further AJC action in this area at the COMMITTEE's 62nd annual meeting, to be held in New York May 23-26.

The first of the three AJC regional meetings is to take place tomorrow, Wednesday, April 3, when all chapters and units of the Eastern seaboard gather for an all-day session at the Bellevue Stratford Hotel, Philadelphia. Midwestern chapters and units will meet Friday, April 5, at the Standard Club in Chicago, and West Coast chapters and units are to convene Wednesday, April 10, at the International Hotel at the Los Angeles Airport.

In announcing the program, Orin Lehman, chairman of the AJC Board of Governors, its ruling body, said:

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Morris E. Abram, President; Philip L. Hoffman, Chairman, Executive Board; Orin Lehman, Chairman, Board of Governors; Nathan Appleman, Chairman, Board of Trustees; Bertram M. Gold, Executive Director

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"As white Americans, as Jews, as members of the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE, we address ourselves now to what we can do to help end the legacy of America's racism, and what our members can do in their own communities to implement the recommendations of the Kerner Report. We emphasize the fact that this is a white problem, and that our activity is geared primarily to what we as white American can do."

Following the initial AJC regional meetings, members will be urged to enlist in local community-wide coalitions such organizations as community relations and human relations agencies, local government agencies, youth-serving organizations, business organizations as well as individual businessmen, organized religious groups, labor unions, chambers of commerce and business and industry associations, PTA's, fraternal organizations and service organizations such as Lions and Rotary.

In each area, the AJC will urge fact-gathering that can be helpful in making the communities conscious of the relevancy of the Kerner Commission report to their own communities, and in that way increase awareness that the Kerner Commission does not deal in abstractions. Some of the topics suggested for inclusion in such fact-gathering are:

levels of unemployment, facilities available for vocational training and job placement, welfare levels, available low-cost housing, education police personnel, plans by city administrations for the coming summer, organizations of young Negroes, organizations of young whites, volunteer youth-serving agencies.

"In all cases," Mr. Lehman observed, "the thrust is to keep the issues raised by the Kerner Report alive and dramatic, pinpointing the factors that are likely to be inflammatory in the community, based on the warnings of the Kerner Report."

Mr. Lehman pointed out that the AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE already was engaged in several projects in areas urged by the Kerner Commission's report to correct the imbalance between white and Negro in America:

1. A summary of the Kerner Report has been made available in several hundred thousand copies, which are being distributed by 23 cooperating agencies.

2. Following a two-day conference that the AJC conducted on the mass media and race relations at Columbia School of Journalism last October for the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Justice Department, meetings are being held on the problem of increasing the number

of jobs in the mass media for Negroes.

3. A 100-page handbook, "The Police on the Urban Frontier," written by George Edwards, a former Detroit police commissioner who is now a Federal Appeals Court judge, is to be published April 8, and already copies have been ordered by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, and other law groups around the country. The handbook is being hailed as a basic resource for police training in human relations as well as a guide to increased police understanding of police problems.

4. AJC members have been actively engaged in projects to find jobs for the hard-core unemployed in the nation's ghettos. For example, Roger P. Soansbend of Boston is Northeast Council Chairman, and Elmer L. Winter of Milwaukee is a member of the Midwest Council, of the National Alliance for Businessmen, a group working with the U.S. Government in an effort to find 100,000 such jobs in the next 18 months.

5. Individual AJC chapters have been engaged in such activities as a housing consultant service in Philadelphia, on-the-job training service for secretarial and clerical workers in several cities, establishment of an interracial day camp in St. Louis, work toward an educational park in Seattle, a camp retreat for high school students in Los Angeles to discuss intergroup relations, urban-suburban school cooperation in Philadelphia, etc.

Members of AJC's Board of Governors will have an opportunity tomorrow (Wednesday, April 3) to continue their discussions of the Kerner Commission report. At a lunch meeting at the new Senate Office Building, discussion on the implications of the report will be led by Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma, a member of the commission. That session will be followed by a series of briefings by a number of officials from the departments of Commerce; Health, Education and Welfare, and Housing and Urban Development.

Earlier, at a breakfast session at the Mayflower Hotel, the COMMITTEE will present a plaque to Sargent Shriver, recently nominated as Ambassador to France, for his "creative leadership in the struggle to uplift the oppressed," as first director of the Peace Corps and as director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. Coincidentally, AJC officials have been closely involved with Mr. Shriver in these activities: Morris E. Abram, AJC President, was first Legal Counsel to the Peace Corps, while Hyman Bookbinder, AJC's Washington representative, served as Mr. Shriver's deputy at O.E.O.

The rest of the morning will be given over to a series of briefings at the State Department, where members of the AJC Board of Governors will discuss such international matters of concern as the status of Jews in Poland and the Soviet Union, U. S. relations with Israel, signs of neo-Nazism in Germany, and other matters.

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